Utes Voluntary Relocation Program Notes Success

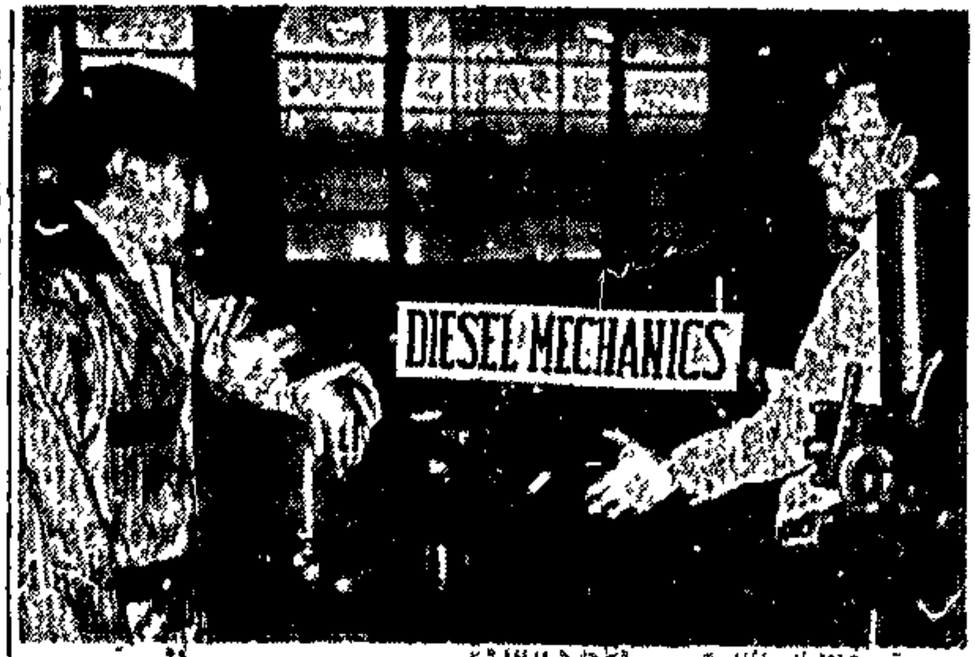
By Ute Indian Tribe
Public Relations Dept.

An outstanding example of Ute Indian people who are being placed under the Reclamation Service Program are Leon and Mary Ann Perank, formerly of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation. This young Ute couple applied to the local Branch of Relocation last January, according to Darrell E. Williams, Agency Relocation Officer, and asked to participate individually.

Mary Ann wanted employment and additional training as a Nurse's Assistant while Leon requested further training in Diesel Mechanics.

A place for Many Ann was found in Pueblo General Hospital where she has been studying and working as a practical nurse since last February. Her Field Relocation Officer, Stanley D. Lyman, reports that Mary Ann is very successful and is extremely well liked at the hospital.

Leon was enrolled in Diesel Mechanics at Pueblo Junior College and, Mr. Lyman reports, is learning fast and enjoys his subject. Upon completion of their training, both Mary Ann and Leon will be placed in very good paying positions.



LEARNS SKILL—Leon Perank, left, of the Ute reservation, gets training in diesel mechanics as part of the Relocation Services Program which assists and trains Indians for employment and residence away from the reservation.

79 Take Training

Leon and Mary Perank are only two examples from the 33 Full Blood and 46 Mixed Blood Ute Indians who have taken vocational training on Relocation. These numbers, totaling 79 trainees, represent the relocation of 269 persons, including 113 Full Bloods and 156 Mixed Bloods. As indicated by the preceding figures, many trainees are fathers and mothers who take their families along to settle in the new community.

The Branch of Relocation, explains Mr. Williams, is ready to finance any Full Blood or Mixed Blood Ute Indian in the training of his choice for a period of two years with all expenses paid by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Mr. Williams feels that most Utes who go on Relocation have a sincere desire and make real efforts to adapt to life away from the reservation. Among the Full Blood Ute trainees 4 have completed training, 4 quit prior to completion of their course, and the remaining 25 are still in training. Of the Mixed Bloods, 29 have completed training, 10 quit prior to completion, and 7 are still in training.

The differences in proportion of Full Bloods and Mixed Bloods still in training or with training completed, according to Mr. Williams, is understandable in that Vocational training was available to the Mixed Bloods in February 1955 whereas Full Bloods were not offered this opportunity until December, nearly a year later.

Bigger Response

At present, explains Mr. Williams, the biggest response is from the Full Blood Utes. Twelve Utes are scheduled to leave on Relocation next week and an additional 5 Utes have applications pending in the Field Relocation Office. Of these 17 individuals, all but one are Full Blood Utes.

Are certain vocations favored by Ute relocatees and are there any differences in the preferences of Full Bloods and Mixed Bloods? The answers to these questions are clear-cut. Full Blood men are equally divided in their choice of auto mechanics and carpentry while Mixed Blood men overwhelmingly favor radio and television. All six Full Blood women so far in training are preparing to be practical nurses or nurse's assistants. Most Mixed Blood women, on the other hand, are enrolled in secretarial training.

The Relocation Program, sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was inaugurated in 1951 as a job placement service, but vocational training under Relocation Services was not initiated until 1953. It was offered to the Mixed Blood Utes and the Paiute Indians at that time, according to Mr. Williams, because of termination legislation affecting these two groups.

At present the only other Indians who may take vocational training under this program are members of the Full Blood Ute

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Ute Program . . .

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Menomini, and Klamath Indian tribes.

Favor Denver

At present, Field Relocation officers are located in St. Louis, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland. Ute Indians have relocated both in California and Colorado but they seem to favor Denver.

The Relocation Services Program, which seeks to assist and train Indians for employment and residence away from reservations, has been a subject of some controversy in recent years.

Relocation officials point out that Indians who apply for relocation assistance do so voluntarily and that the entire program is organized on the basis of helping people to help themselves While it is not claimed that the Relocation Services Program can adequately meet all existing needs, its exponents cite the success of many Indians, thus relocated, to adjust satisfactorily in non-Indian communities.

Among critics of the Relocation Program, including both Indian individuals and groups such as the National Congress of American Indians, the chief objections may be summarized as follows:

1. The Relocation Program represents the Indian Bureau's desire to solve the Indian problem by separating Indians from their land, resources, customs, etc.

2. Assimilation of Indians into the white culture is not the answer. The real and basic Indian problems are poverty, ill health, poor education, and economic stagnation.

3. Relocation is the Indian Bureau's cover-up for its failure to do anything for the Indians in their home territory. The Indian Bureau has failed to provide funds to carry out reservation development programs. Unlike the Utes, many tribes have no funds of their own.

4. An Indian who is relocated probably will have his material needs and desires satisfied but will never be completely accepted. Chances are great that he will end up in a slum area with other racial minorities. The question, then, is will he be happier with fewer material possessions at the reservation level or will he be unhappier in a city with an abundance of material goods?

While there undoubtedly is justification for some of these criticisms, it should be noted that advocates of the Relocation Program do not feel that it is desirable for all Indians at this time, and further, they emphasize that the entire program is on a voluntary basis.

Financial Aid

Individuals who wish to take advantage of the Relocation Program's Vocational Training may expect financial assistance in transportation from the reservation to the relocation area, subsistence allowance for traveling, weekly allowance for living expenses for the 24 months of training, shipment of household goods, health services under membership in an approved Group Health Insurance Plan, and purchase of tools and equipment necessary for entering into formal apprenticeship training

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The Ute Indian Tribe is encouraging relocation in cases where it is the individual's desire but, like Relocation officials, would not aprove of undue urging inasmuch as applicants who responded because of pressure would be least likely to succeed.

It should be noted that Ute relocatees will not jeopardize their tribal status by leaving the reservation.